

In 1988, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure authorized FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This effective program provides grants to communities to mitigate hazards, but only provides grants to "build better" after a disaster. At the time, no program existed to help communities mitigate risks from all hazards before disaster strikes.

In the 1990s, under the leadership of FEMA Administrator James Lee Witt, FEMA developed a pre-disaster mitigation pilot program known as "Project Impact". Congress appropriated funds for Project Impact in each of fiscal years 1997 through 2001. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure first authorized the current Pre-Disaster Mitigation program in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

The PDM program reduces the risk of natural hazards, which is where the preponderance of risk is in our country. The devastating ice storms that struck the middle of the United States (including Missouri, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Kentucky) earlier this year and the floods currently on the Red River in the Midwest are examples of the tragic, real impact of natural disasters that occur in our nation every year. Over the last decade, natural disasters have cost our nation an average of nearly \$30 billion per year.

Mitigation has been proven to save money. Studies by the Congressional Budget Office and National Institute of Building Sciences show that for every dollar spent on pre-disaster mitigation projects, future losses are reduced by three to four dollars. In 2005, the Muthazard Mitigation Council, an advisory body of the National Institute of Building Sciences, found "that a dollar spent on mitigation saves society an average of \$4." The Council found that flood mitigation measures yield even greater savings. According to a September 2007 CBO report on the reduction in Federal disaster assistance that is likely to result from the PDM program, "on average, future losses are reduced by about \$3 (measured in discounted present value) for each \$1 spent on those projects, including both federal and nonfederal spending."

While empirical data is critical, perhaps more telling are real-life mitigation "success stories". One of the best examples of mitigation is the town of Valmeyer, Illinois. The town was devastated by the great flood of 1993. With \$45 million in Federal, state, and local funding, the town relocated to bluffs 400 feet above the site of the former town. When faced with floods last year, the residents of that town were out of harm's way, as the Chicago Tribune reported in a story aptly titled "Valmeyer Illinois—Soaked in '93, Town now High and Dry". The June 19, 2008 story quotes an 86-year old resident named Elenora Anderson. Her home was destroyed by the 1993 flood but as she said, "I'm sure glad I don't have to worry now that we're high enough here on the hill."

This month, we have seen the communities of North Dakota and my home state of Minnesota damaged by floods. Many of these same communities were devastated by floods in 1997. However, because of mitigation after the 1997 floods, the communities face far less risk. Even before this year's floods, mitigation investments had paid off. For example, in Grand Forks, after the 1997 floods, FEMA spent \$23 million to acquire vulnerable homes in the flood plain. In 2006, a flood came within two feet of the 1997 flood level, and according

to FEMA, the 1997 mitigation investment saved \$24.6 million. That investment represents a return of 107 percent after just one flood.

Another success story comes from Story County, Iowa. There, six homes that had been flooded in 1990, 1993, and 1996 were bought out with \$549,662 in FEMA mitigation grants. In 1998 when a flood struck again, FEMA estimates that \$541,900 in damages to the homes was avoided. This mitigation project paid for itself in just one flood, and the estimated savings do not include the costs of warning, rescue, or evacuation.

Mitigation is an investment. It is an investment that not only benefits the Federal Government, but state and local governments as well. Projects funded by the PDM program reduce the damage that would be paid for by the Federal Government and state and local governments in a Major Disaster under the Stafford Act. However, mitigation also reduces the risks from smaller, more frequent, events that state and local governments face every day, as not every storm, fire, or flood warrants the assistance of the Federal Government.

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation program, through property improvements, takes citizens out of harm's way, by elevating a house, or making sure a hospital can survive a hurricane or earthquake. In doing so, it allows first responders to focus on what is unpredictable in a disaster rather than on what is foreseeable and predictable.

H.R. 1746 reauthorizes the PDM program for three years, at a level of \$250 million for each of fiscal years 2010 through 2012. The bill increases the minimum amount that each State can receive under the program from \$500,000 to \$575,000, and codifies the competitive selection process of the program as currently administered by FEMA.

The bill also eliminates the existing sunset in the program. As the evidence clearly shows, this program works well and is cost effective. It should no longer be treated as a pilot program with a sunset. Rather, state and local governments should have the certainty of knowing this program will be available in the future so they can conduct vital longer-term mitigation planning.

Last year, the House passed a virtually identical bill, H.R. 6109, but the other body did not take action on this bill. While a one-year extension was included in the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations Act to keep this vital program alive, Congress must act. If we do not, this worthy program will sunset on September 30, 2009.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1746, the "Pre-Disaster Mitigation Act of 2009".

H.R. 1747, THE GREAT LAKES ICEBREAKER REPLACEMENT ACT

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I today introduce H.R. 1747, the "Great Lakes Icebreaker Replacement Act". U.S. industries in the heartland of the United States are totally dependent on Great Lakes icebreakers to keep them supplied with raw materials during

the winter months. Without them, steel mills would shut down for want of iron ore and electrical generation would halt for want of the coal necessary to power generators. People could not just lose their jobs—but their lives.

During the 2006–2007 winter season, transportation of 10,400,000 tons of iron ore on the Great Lakes supported 100,000 jobs at Minnesota and Michigan iron ore mines and lower Lakes steel mills and 300,000 jobs at supplier industries. That same winter, 6,400,000 tons of coal were shipped on the Great Lakes to keep the region supplied with electricity. However, we don't have the icebreaking capacity on the Great Lakes that we have had historically. During the spring of 2008, U.S.-flag vessels operating on the Great Lakes suffered more than \$1.3 million in damages to their hulls because the Coast Guard did not have sufficient assets to keep the shipping lanes open.

People who are not from the Great Lakes region probably do not realize that there is ice on the Lakes and their interconnecting channels from early December until April. Some years, the Coast Guard has been breaking ice in the St. Mary's river until mid-May. Think of these icebreakers as the snow plows for Great Lakes shipping. It is the Federal Government's responsibility to keep these marine highways open so the needs of the public can be met.

In 2006, the Coast Guard took delivery of the new icebreaker MACKINAW. Unlike the old MACKINAW, this vessel is a combined buoytender-icebreaker so that it can execute Coast Guard missions year-round. Five of the Coast Guard's icebreakers on the Lakes are close to the end of their useful lives. Further, the buoytenders on the Lakes are having difficulty breaking ice of the thickness that is commonly found on the Lakes.

The \$153 million authorized in H.R. 1747 authorizes the funding to build a sister ship to the MACKINAW. The design of the MACKINAW is proven and the vessel has shown that it is up to the job of breaking ice on the Lakes during the winter and tending buoys during the spring, summer and fall months. Not only will this funding ensure that our nation's vital industries are supplied during the winter—construction of this icebreaker will create jobs at U.S. shipyards and the related supplier industries at a time when job creation is so vital to an economy losing some 600,000 jobs per month.

For all of these reasons, it is critically important that we provide the Coast Guard with the resources necessary to build a replacement icebreaker for the Great Lakes region.

TRANSPORTATION BUDGET AUTHORITY IN THE FY 2010 BUDGET RESOLUTION

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, the Budget Resolution, as ordered reported last night by the House Committee on the Budget, provides a solid foundation for the surface transportation authorization act. I thank Chairman SPRATT and the Committee on the Budget for their leadership and vigorous support for transportation and infrastructure programs.

If the Budget Resolution is applied over the six-year period from fiscal years 2010 to 2015, the Resolution assumes a base allocation of \$324 billion for highway, highway safety, and transit programs, including \$312 billion of contract authority. Importantly, this allocation restores \$82 billion over the six-year period of highway contract authority that had been cut from the Congressional Budget Office baseline, which assumed fiscal year 2009 rescissions would recur in all future years.

In addition, the Resolution establishes a Reserve Fund to allow this base allocation of \$324 billion to be adjusted upward as necessary to accommodate higher funding levels to the extent they can be supported by the Highway Trust Fund.

The Resolution also assumes the Airport Improvement Program is funded at \$4.0 billion in FY 2010, \$4.1 billion in FY 2011, and \$4.2 billion in FY 2012, consistent with H.R. 915, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2009, as ordered reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on March 5, 2009. This is an increase of \$840 million over the baseline funding level for this program over the three-year period from FY 2010–2012.

The Resolution rejects the Office of Management and Budget's proposal to change how programs funded by contract authority are treated for budget scoring purposes. This proposal, had it been adopted, would have converted the mandatory contract authority that currently funds our highway, highway safety, transit and airport grant programs to a simple authorization of appropriations for budget scoring purposes. I am pleased that the Budget Resolution continues to recognize the unique nature of trust-funded programs by rejecting this ill-advised proposal.

A TRIBUTE TO HUMENA BUTE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Humena Bute, an educator and youth advocate.

Ms. Humena Bute worked for the NYC Department of Education from 1970 until her early retirement in 1995. While employed with the Department of Education she advanced to Special Education Records Manager in School District 19. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Community and Human Services from Empire State College in 1997. She applied for and received a per-diem substitute teacher certificate in 1998, and has worked in various NYC schools in Brooklyn to present.

In 2000, Ms. Bute became a member of the Brooklyn Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club Inc (NANBPWC). She became a Life Member in 2005. During the past eight years Ms. Bute has held the office of Recording Secretary, Vice President (Membership Chair) and has voluntarily served on the Battered Women's Shelter project, the Thanksgiving Basket Committee and the Founders Day Celebration Committees from 2003–2005. Ms. Bute received an Appreciation Award from The Brooklyn Club president in 2002. In 2007 Ms. Bute received the Membership Chair of

the Year Award from National Director of Membership of NANBPWC Inc. She has recently been appointed to serve as Membership Director of the Northeast District of NANBPWC Inc.

From 1997 to 2000 Ms. Bute was given the opportunity to work with at-risk youths as an Educational Specialist for Mental Health Juvenile Justice Diversion project in Brooklyn N.Y. She was also a recruiter for Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Program in various High Schools in Brooklyn N.Y.

In 2004, Ms. Bute became a member of the Stuyvesant Heights Lions Club and in 2006 she received the Lion of the Year award from the club president. In 2007 Ms. Bute was nominated as Club President and still holds that title to this day. She is also a Board Member of the Bridge Street Child Development Day Care in Brooklyn NY. Ms. Bute has recently joined the American College of Counselors.

Ms. Bute is a mother of two children, Felicia Allen and the late Gregory Bute and three loving grandchildren Jason Allen, Geninne Allen and Shanay Bute. Ms. Bute regards her many accomplishments and children as gifts from God.

OMNIBUS PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 146, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. The rivers, mountains, parks and forests of the United States are a fundamental part of our national heritage, and it is crucial that these resources are protected for future generations to enjoy.

The majority of the bills in this monumental legislation had been considered and enjoyed strong bipartisan support in previous Congresses, and the passage of these provisions for public land management, forest preservation, and other crucial conservation measures is long overdue. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work of Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID, Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI, the bill's sponsor Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, and Representative NICK RAHALL in keeping this legislation moving forward.

I would also like to congratulate my friend Congresswoman LOUISE SLAUGHTER for the inclusion of her provision on the Women's Rights National Historic Park in this important legislation. It is fitting that, as we work to protect the landmarks that help to make this country great, we commemorate the central role women have played in our Nation's history.

On July 19, 1848, a group of women activists including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Mary Ann McClintock organized the first Women's Rights Convention at Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York. The document produced at the Convention, entitled the Declaration of Sentiments, articulated the then radical idea that certain rights accrued to women, such as the freedom to own property and the right to an education. That meeting

spearheaded a 72-year struggle for women's suffrage, ending with the ratification of the 19th amendment on August 18, 1920.

This provision in the Omnibus Public Lands Act would pay tribute to a milestone event in the women's rights movement by allowing for the construction of a trail in the Women's Rights Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York, and permitting the establishment of a network of historical sites relevant to women's history.

The park would serve as a physical reminder of women's historical contributions to equality of rights and opportunity, values which are central to the legacy of the United States. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating these accomplishments by ensuring that the landmarks of the women's rights movement are remembered and preserved.

FEDERAL LAND ASSISTANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCE- MENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration of the bill (H.R. 1404) to authorize a supplemental funding source for catastrophic emergency wildland fire suppression activities on Department of the Interior and National Forest System lands, to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a cohesive wildland fire management strategy, and for other purposes:

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chair, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 1404, the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act and I salute Chairman RAHALL for bringing this important bill to the floor today.

Last year a series of wildfires devastated counties across California, including Santa Cruz County in my Congressional District. The fires burned 1.4 billion acres of land across the State and cost over \$1 billion to contain. Experts expect a similarly difficult fire season in California this year. Over the past decade wildland fires have increased in size and quantity, and projections indicate that this trend will continue due to climate change, drought, and other factors.

The skyrocketing costs of fighting wildland fires have forced the Forest Service and Department of Interior to "borrow" funds from non-fire programs, distracting these agencies from their core missions. Wildland fire activities now account for 48 percent of the Forest Service budget and more than 10 percent of the Interior Department budget.

This bill will create the FLAME Fund to help cover the costs of fighting fires after the money appropriated by the federal government runs out. Agencies may use this fund only if the Secretary of Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture deems the fire large enough or dangerous enough to warrant using the fund.

The FLAME Act requires the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to submit a report to Congress containing a comprehensive wildland fire management strategy. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found